



ERA 10: 1968-present

Contemporary United States

Grades 5 and High School



The Vietnam War continued on into the early 1970s, even though Nixon had promised to withdraw troops after he was elected in 1969

Jack Knox Papers, *Washington Word-Twisters at Work*, Box 11, F. 493, THS 640. This image reflects the cynicism that some Americans held towards Nixon regarding his failed promise to withdraw troops from Vietnam as soon as he became president. The war had raged throughout the 1960s during LBJ's presidency, eventually leading many Americans to believe that the war effort was a failure that had sacrificed too many American lives. Nixon kept American troops fighting in Vietnam for almost five more years after he was elected (he was reelected in 1972). He had even extended the war into the neighboring countries of Cambodia and Laos. Troops were eventually withdrawn from southeast Asia, though what was called a "phased withdrawal." When Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, fell to the northern, Communist forces, American troops withdrew completely. The Vietnam War is usually seen as one of America's most costly errors in foreign policy. Public distrust of Nixon heightened in 1973 during the Watergate scandal. Nixon was accused of lying, obstruction of justice, and using the Internal Revenue Service and other government agencies illegally. Although the details of the affair are quite complicated, Nixon essentially encouraged his staff to spy on the opposing political party, the Democrats, through illegal means.

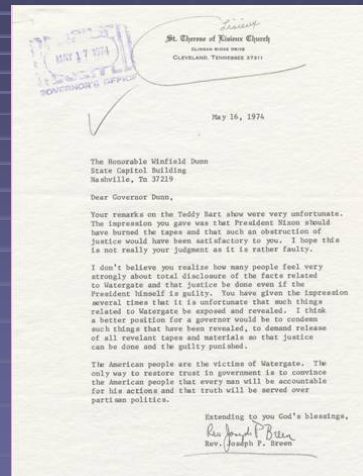
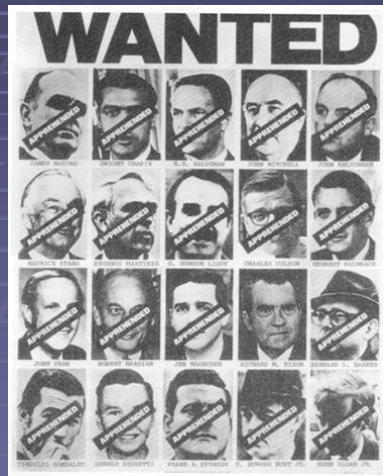
A Tennessee Soldier in Vietnam



Christopher Ammons resting during patrol and standing next to his translator

Image on the left from the Christopher Ammons Papers, Box 2, File 15, VI-B-5v. Sgt. Christopher Ammons resting during patrol on Vung Chua Mountain on September 23, 1969. Ammons has written "Myself, takeing (sic) during Patrol on "Big" Vung Chua Mt. We had stoped (sic) at a stream for some rest. I pulled point on this patrol." on the back of the photograph. On the right, from Box 2, File 11, Sgt. Ammons is pictured with his Company interpreter at Dong Tam, October 22, 1968. Ammons is twenty years old in this picture.

The Watergate Scandal (1973)



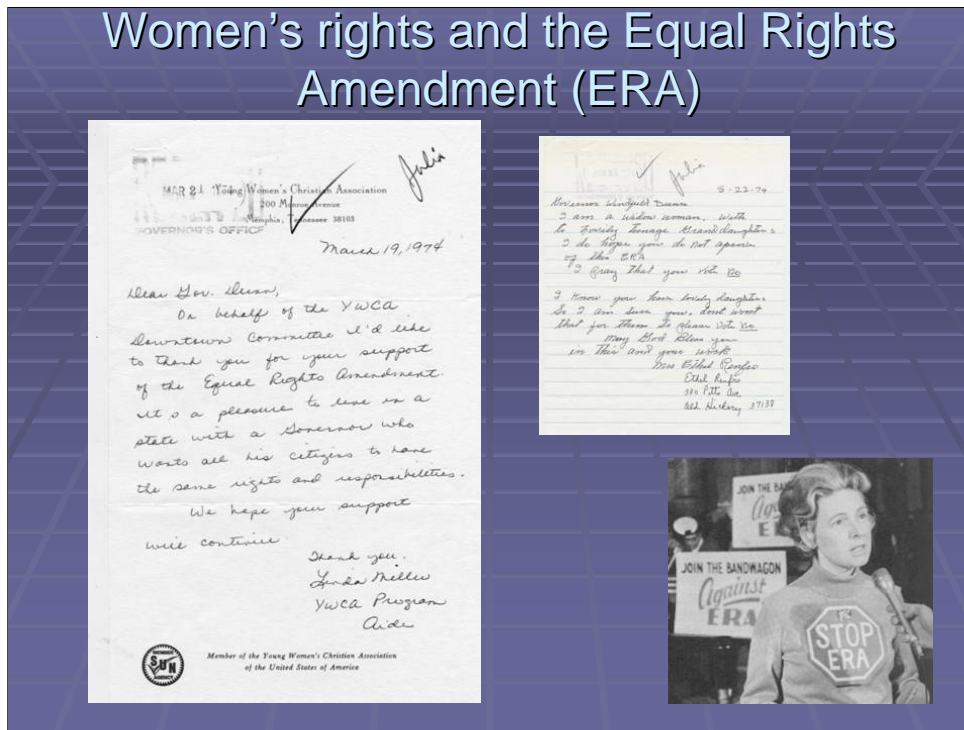
From *All the People 1945-2001*, Book 10 in *A History of US*, page 174. Photograph from the Library of Congress. Letter on the right from the Governor Winfield Dunn Papers, Box 107, Folder 17. The letter was written to the Governor of Tennessee, Winfield Dunn, months after the Watergate scandal had been exposed. The constituent is angry that Governor Dunn has publicly suggested that Nixon should have burnt the incriminating Watergate tapes in order to protect his presidency, thereby committing obstruction of justice. The constituent's closing paragraph reflects his anger toward the administration when he writes, "The American people are the victims of Watergate. The only way to restore trust in government is to convince the American people that every man will be accountable for his actions and that truth will be served over partisan politics." This image on the left reflects the cynicism and distrust that many Americans held towards Nixon after the Watergate scandal of 1973. All of the men pictured except for Nixon are listed as "apprehended," but Nixon himself finally resigned to avoid being impeached. He left the White House on August 9, 1974.

Transcription:

St. Therese of Lisieux Church
Clingan Ridge Drive
Cleveland, Tennessee 37311

May 16, 1974

Women's rights and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)



Photograph from *All the People 1945-2001*, Book 10 in *A History of US*, page 142. Phyllis Schlafly, seen on the lower right, was the national leader of the “Stop the Equal Rights Amendment” movement. This image from 1975 pictures Schlafly at a rally, talking to reporters, in Springfield, Illinois. Image belongs to Corbis-Bettmann. The letter on the left is from the Governor Winfield Dunn Papers, Box 107, Folder 8, and the letter on the upper right is from the Governor Winfield Dunn Papers, Box 107, Folder 9.

The complete text of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) reads:

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

The amendment, written in 1923 by Alice Paul, a suffragist and founder of the National Woman's Party, calls for the equal treatment of men and women under the force of the U.S. Constitution. The ERA was first introduced into Congress in 1923. It was passed and subsequently submitted to the states for ratification on March 22, 1972. Congress extended the original deadline of seven years to June 30, 1982. When this deadline passed, only 35 states (of the necessary three-fourths, or 38) had ratified. The fifteen states that have not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment include: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah, and Virginia.

Transcriptions:

(1) Letter on the left from the Gov. Winfield Dunn Papers, Box 107, Folder 8

The Reagan Years



- Reagan rejected New Deal/Great Society anti-poverty programs and the liberal ideology behind them
- He believed that unrestricted capitalism would lead to opportunity and prosperity for all

Governor Lamar Alexander Papers, Box 894, Folder 11. The photographs on the left show several different views of Reagan's visit to Nashville on March 15, 1982. Reagan believed that economic freedom creates a wealthy society, and the benefits would "trickle-down" to all levels of society. This was commonly referred to as "trickle-down economics," "Reaganomics," or, more technically, "supply-side" economics. Reagan was also anti-tax and anti-Communist. He was committed to increasing the size of the military and decreasing spending in other areas. The Reagan administration continued the "Cold War" with the Communist government of the USSR throughout the 1980s. Tensions between the two world superpowers, the USA and USSR, defined American foreign relations during the Reagan years.

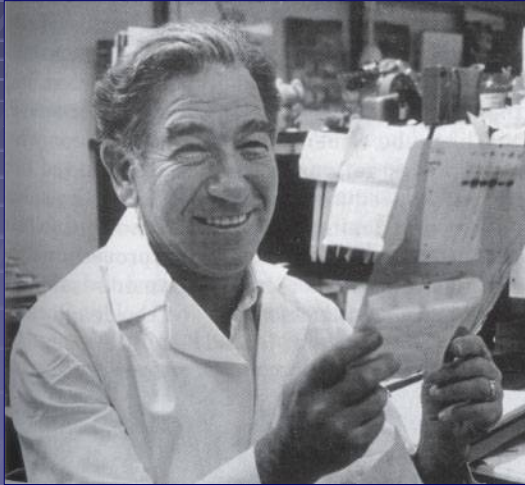
The Cold War continues...

The nuclear arms race between the USSR and United States characterized political relations between the two countries throughout the 1980s; attempts to promote disarmament were usually met with distrust and suspicion.



Jack Knox Papers, *Watcha Bet?*, Box 11, Folder 494, THS 640. This political cartoon speaks to the deep distrust that characterized United States/USSR diplomatic relations. The large figure on the right represent in Soviet government; he is in the process of cheating the figure of Uncle Sam, who asks, "I can trust you to play fair? Can't I?" The sign "Disarmament game – NO INSPECTION" refers to the issue at hand: can the Americans trust the Soviets when they claim to be disarming their nuclear weapons, especially when they are not permitting foreign inspections? Jack Knox was a political cartoonist who worked for the *Nashville Banner* for many years; he was known for his conservatism.

Scientific and Technological Progress in Recent Decades



**Dr. Stanley
Cohen of
Vanderbilt
University
earned the
Noble Prize in
1986 for his
scientific
research on
growth factors**

Dr. Stanley Cohen of Vanderbilt, seen above, shared the 1986 Nobel Prize winner in Physiology and Medicine with Rita Levi-Montalcini; both were honored for their studies of growth factors. Dr. Cohen was the son of Jewish immigrants; beginning in 1959, he worked at Vanderbilt University as a professor in the biochemistry department. This photograph was originally published in the *Nashville Banner*. At TSLA, it is located in the Blue Book Collection, RG 238.

The Urban Landscape: Patterns of City Growth



Tennessee Postcard Collection: on the left, Memphis postcard, THS Accession #528, on the right, a postcard of Nashville's downtown area, taken before several well-known skyscrapers had been built. Throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, southern cities such as Nashville and Memphis grew tremendously. Many of the urban areas suffered from what is commonly known as "white flight." Urban areas retained poorer, African-American populations while wealthier whites moved to the suburban areas. This pattern can be seen in both Nashville and Memphis, and throughout cities in America, such as Los Angeles, Dallas, and Atlanta. The views above show the denseness of the urban areas in their core, but the urban sprawl continued outwards for miles, leading to problems such as increased traffic, weakened inner city development, displaced communities, and racial polarization.

The changing American family



On the left, George Carl Dury (1859-1924) and family. His wife's name was Catherine Norvell Watkins Dury, and his son was Carl George Dury (c. 1891 - ?), circa 1900, from the Nell Savage Mahoney Papers, THS VI-B-4, Box 15, Folder 38, DB #30141, TSLA. The three photographs on the right that include African Americans are from a private collection. The union of two men shows David Knight (right) with partner Joe Lazzaro as Donald Bird presides at their wedding at City Hall in San Francisco. *Chronicle* photo by Liz Hafalia. Web site: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/object/article?o=42&f=/g/a/2004/02/18/gaywedgallery.DTL>

From its beginnings, the United States was always a diverse nation, as Native Americans had settled the area long before European explorers came. African Americans were an integral part of the country as early as the colonial period. Yet in many ways America had often been perceived as a nation of whites living in traditional nuclear families – mother, father, son, daughter. After the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, many African Americans were able to enjoy greater equality with whites, although injustices persist. As seen in some of the photographs on the upper right, integrated marriages and non-traditional families are increasingly common in the United States. The number of Hispanics living in America is also on the rise; in Nashville, for instance, whites, African Americans, and Mexicans are joined by a plethora of other ethnic groups, including Kurds, Laotians, Vietnamese, Somalians, and more.

Middle East Relations: Attempts at Peace



From *All the People 1945-2001*, Book 10 in *A History of US*, page 214. In 1993, President Clinton brought together Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (left) and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat (right). The two leaders had just signed a peace accord at the White House. Image from Reuters/Corbis-Bettmann. Rabin was murdered by an right-wing, extremist Jew in 1995 who opposed his peace efforts; Arafat died in 2004 of natural causes. After the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, the United States became drawn into Middle East affairs to an even greater extent than before.